**Organizational Pathologies (Introduction-Part II) - J. Perez Rios**

1. As I mentioned in a previous post, identifying a pathology is a prerequisite to prescribing any treatment for the diagnosed deficiency. With that aim, I prepared back in 2008 a taxonomy of "**Organizational pathologies**" that I am sharing with you. I classified the 26 ones I found widespread into three main families or groups.

The first group includes pathologies related to organizations' structural design and how the organization copes with its total environmental complexity by creating the necessary sub-organizations. These I name Structural Pathologies.

The second group includes pathologies related to the adequacy of the organizations (at all recursion levels) to the prescription made by the VSM about functional subsystems and their relations. These I call Functional Pathologies.

The third group subsumes Information System and Communication Channel Pathologies.

**In a previous post, I shared a short version of the first group of pathologies**

**(I. Structural Pathologies). In this post, I will continue showing some of the pathologies included in the second group: II. Functional Pathologies. The denominations used, as are System 5, System 2, etc., are typically used in the Beer's Viable System Model (VSM).**

**II. Functional Pathologies (1)**

This group includes 17 pathologies related to each of the organizations that compose the total organization. In each unit one must check to see that all the essential functions (systems) necessary for the organization’s viability exist and work adequately.

Here are the more frequent pathologies affecting each of the VSM functions (systems) and the whole organization (System 5, System 4, System 3, System 3\*, Homeostat 4-3, System 2, and System 1). Since we may find pathologies in all those functions, I will start mentioning the ones related to System 5.

*Pathologies related to System 5. Identity not defined or ill defined:*

*II1- Ill-defined identity.*

Identity has not been sufficiently clarified or defined (“I do not know who I am”).

*II2- Institutional schizophrenia.*

Two or more different identity conceptions produce conflict within an organization.

*II3- System 5 collapses into System 3 (Non-existing Metasystem).*

System 5 intervenes undesirably in the affairs of System 3.

*II4- Inadequate representation vis-à-vis higher levels.*

Poor connection between System 5s organisations pertaining to different recursion levels within the same global organization.



2. In the presentation I made for the **Metaphorum Group in May 2022**, I show (in addition to other materials as the example of use of the “**Recursion Levels-Key Factors Matrix**”) **the three global maps** with all these **organizational pathologies.**

<https://youtu.be/62mRBzRDxHI>

3. A shorter exposition of the methodological approach and the list of organizational pathologies can also be consulted in this paper:

[Pérez Ríos, J.](https://www.emerald.com/insight/search?q=Jos%C3%A9%20P%C3%A9rez%20R%C3%ADos) (2010), "Models of organizational cybernetics for diagnosis and design", *[Kybernetes](https://www.emerald.com/insight/publication/issn/0368-492X%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank)*, Vol. 39 No. 9/10, pp. 1529-1550.

<https://doi.org/10.1108/03684921011081150>

4. A detailed description of all those issues can be consulted in the book:

[Design and Diagnosis for Sustainable Organizations. The Viable System Method](https://link.springer.com/book/10.1007/978-3-642-22318-1)

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